

Chapter 6

Rear Area Defensive Operations

Rear area defensive operations are actions taken by all units to secure and sustain the force. These actions are taken in a concerted effort. They include those actions necessary to neutralize or defeat enemy operations in the rear area. They also ensure freedom of action in deep and close operations and include area damage control.

The division commander is responsible for rear operations within his boundaries. The ADC(S) through the rear operations center is responsible for the rear area defensive operations in the division rear. Within the maneuver brigade area, the brigade commander is responsible for rear operations. Threat activity may exceed the capability of a commander's assets. When this happens, the division commander may assume responsibility for defeating a Level III threat in the brigade rear area by restructuring the boundaries and providing additional forces.

The objectives of rear area defensive operations are:

- Secure the rear areas.
- Prevent or minimize enemy interference with command, control, and communications.
- Prevent or minimize disruption of combat support and CSS forward.
- Provide unimpeded movement of friendly units throughout the rear area.
- Provide continuous, unimpeded support to deep, close, and rear operations.
- Provide area damage control before, during, and after an attack or incident.

REAR AREA DEFENSIVE OPERATION CONSIDERATIONS

6-1. The key considerations to rear area defensive operations are sound planning, early warning, continuous OPSEC, and the rapid deployment of sufficient forces and resources to counter the threat. Rear area defensive operations are a command responsibility. The division commander ensures battle planning includes consideration for deep, close, and rear operations. Rear operations are a vital part of the division's overall operations. They are part of the mission analysis, the threat assessment, and intelligence

preparation of the battlefield (IPB). They are also part of resource allocation, and the base assessment process.

6-2. The DISCOM units must defend themselves against attempts to disrupt their operations. They must be able to minimize destruction and to reinforce their units. The DISCOM units must also be able to gain time until response forces arrive. As discussed below, units form base defense perimeters to defend against the threat. If enemy forces exceed base and base cluster defense capabilities, response forces are used. These forces will provide the initial force to close with and to destroy the enemy. If an enemy incursion exceeds the capability of response forces, tactical combat forces must be committed to neutralize the threat.

6-3. Responsiveness is a key to defeating enemy incursions in the rear area. Responsiveness requires the immediate reaction and rapid deployment of sufficient combat power and area damage control resources. These two forces destroy the enemy and ensure minimal damage to the area. Responsiveness is achieved through:

- Effective command relationships and supervision.
- Reliable communications.
- Accurate intelligence.
- Centralized planning and decentralized execution.
- Organic mobility of response force.
- Training and rehearsals.
- Prior assessment of the capabilities of bases and facilities to withstand enemy attack. This assessment is based on a unit's degree of exposure and that unit's importance to the division's ability to sustain operations. This mission-essential vulnerability analysis assists the DISCOM commander to allocate resources, to protect personnel, supplies, and facilities in consonance with their importance to the mission.

SECURITY

6-4. Logistics traffic is a high priority interdiction target for threat aircraft, artillery, and unconventional warfare elements. In the offense, bypassed enemy forces will attempt to get supplies by force. Single vehicles, especially ones moving fuel and ammunition, may be ambushed by unconventional forces.

6-5. After assessing threat capabilities and intentions, the rear operations commander may decide to assign escorts to critical convoys such as those moving fuel and ammunition. Escort possibilities include ground escorts of military police (MP)s, combat engineers, or tactical forces. Also considered are aerial escorts or ADA systems such as Avengers and Stingers. When resources are scarce, dedicated escorts may not be practical or possible. In such cases, response forces, air defense, or fire support assets may be positioned along the MSR to provide general support.

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY

6-6. To enhance sustainment operations, DISCOM elements are often grouped together. Elements may be grouped into bases and base clusters for mutual support. The ROC is ultimately responsible for the composition of bases and base clusters in the division rear. In addition, the ROC must ensure units selected for collocation complement each other. A mix of weapon systems, planning and supervisory personnel, and varied communications assets are required to form a viable base.

6-7. The DISCOM S2/S3 and DSB S2/S3 sections coordinate with the ROC on grouping of DISCOM units in the division rear. In the maneuver brigade area, the FSB commander is responsible for BSA security. Through his S2/S3, he coordinates with the brigade rear CP for planning security operations.

6-8. Certain bases or base clusters are designated as critical by the ROC. This is done in coordination with the DISCOM staff. These critical bases may contain a majority of a class of supply or service. An example of a critical base might be ammunition or fuel storage sites. All command and control headquarters are considered critical, as are critical communications nodes. In addition to its criticality, each base is assessed for its vulnerability. Vulnerability is based on the base's location, composition, and relative target value. Since forces cannot be strong everywhere, resources must be used to protect the most critical and vulnerable assets first.

EARLY WARNING SECURITY

6-9. Receiving early warning of pending enemy actions gives the base commander time to react to any threat. Security measures vary with enemy threat, forces available, and other factors; all-around security is essential. Any of the following could warn of pending enemy actions:

- Outposts.
- Patrols.
- Military police.
- Ground surveillance and counter-fire radar's.
- The local populace.
- Host nation intelligence.
- Military working dogs.
- Air reconnaissance and surveillance.
- Civilian informants.
- Actions of indigenous personnel near the base.

THREAT EVALUATION AND INTEGRATION

6-10. Threat evaluation is a detailed study of the enemy forces. It considers threat organization, tactical doctrine, equipment, and support systems. The DISCOM passes any information it has on the threat to the ROC to assist in its evaluation. Supply vehicle drivers and customers coming into the division area are valuable sources of information.

6-11. Once the threat evaluation is complete, this information is integrated with weather and terrain factors. This determines how the threat is likely to operate in our rear area. Relevant information developed by the ROC is passed to the DISCOM. Base clusters must ensure that all base commanders understand the different threat levels and the associated actions. The ROC must also be aware that DISCOM units are neither staffed nor equipped to continue support operations at normal levels while responding to increases in threat activity. Support will be degraded. How much support is degraded is dependent upon responses to threat activity.

6-12. Level I threats are those which can be defeated by base or base cluster self-defense measures. They normally involve the activities of agents, saboteurs, and terrorists.

6-13. Level II threats are those beyond base or base cluster self-defense capabilities. Response forces, typically MPs with supporting fires, can defeat this threat. This threat normally involves sabotage, raid, ambush, and reconnaissance operations. Special purpose or unconventional forces and tactical reconnaissance units normally conduct these operations.

6-14. A tactical combat force is required to defeat a Level III threat. Level III threats normally involve:

- Heliborne operations.
- Airborne operations.
- Penetration by enemy forces from the main battle area.
- Ground force deliberate operations (for example, operational maneuver groups with linkup of smaller airborne and assault units).
- Infiltration operations

BASE AND BASE CLUSTERS

BASE

6-15. A base is a unit or multi-unit position with a definite perimeter. For rear area units, the DISCOM commander determines the position of the base in conjunction with the ROC. Frequently, a DISCOM company constitutes a base. Normally, the base commander is the senior unit commander present. Selection of the base commander should take into consideration not only rank, but also branch and experience.

BASE CLUSTERS

6-16. Base clusters contain several bases grouped together to enhance security and mission accomplishment. A base cluster normally does not have a defined perimeter or established access points. Base clusters rely on mutual support among bases for protection. Mutual support is achieved through interlocking fires, integrated patrol and surveillance plans, and use of reaction forces. A base cluster reaction force also aids in mutual support. The base cluster commander must designate the personnel in the reaction force and ensure they have sufficient weapons, mobility, and communications. They must be trained to react quickly and appropriately.

6-17. Typically, the DSB commander is a base cluster commander. His base cluster will normally include units located in the DSA. Corps logistics units, such as ammunition supply points, may be located at isolated locations within the division rear. They either operate as separate bases or are assigned to a base cluster by the ADC(S). The FSB commander is normally the base cluster commander for units in the BSA. The base cluster commander establishes a base cluster operations center (BCOC) with assets primarily from the S2/S3 section. The BCOC provides the command and control to plan, coordinate, and supervise base cluster operations. It interfaces with the ROC on terrain management, movement's requirements, and security operations. The BCOC positions units assigned to the cluster into bases and designates the base commanders. The ROC assigns divisional and non-divisional units in the division rear to base clusters or independent bases. The base cluster commander is responsible for integrating base defense plans into a base cluster defense plan.

REAR AREA DEFENSE

6-18. An effective base defense system must accomplish the following four tasks:

- **Security of the base.** The base and base cluster commanders must establish the necessary defensive measures to ensure the security of their units. Each commander must apply METT-TC analysis to determine requirements.
- **Detection.** Detection is the early warning of enemy infiltration attempts. Detection devices include day and night observation devices as well as communications, intelligence, radar, and sensor equipment. Chemical and radiological monitoring must also be used. Warning systems and procedures must be established and understood by all personnel. If an attack is unlikely, few people are involved in defensive operations. However, personnel will always man observation posts (OP)s, and access points. If a threat is probable, defensive requirements will disrupt support operations. Alarms should

be used to notify all personnel of alert postures. Warning devices includes sirens, pyrotechnics and horns. The MPs may provide the base and base cluster commander's link for detection, early warning, and deployment against enemy attacks in the rear. Information gathered by MP elements dispersed throughout the rear area helps apprise commanders of enemy activity near bases. When the ROC determines the need, MPs respond to bases under attack.

- **Delay.** The defense system must be able to hinder the threat's progress to permit defense forces to react. Obstacles covered by direct or indirect fires slow or canalize movement. The ROC can, with G3 approval, authorize mine emplacement in the division rear. However, he must ensure a proposed minefield is coordinated with adjacent, higher, and subordinate units. He must also ensure limitations to friendly maneuver units are minimized and all requirements for reporting, marking, and recording are met.
- **Destruction.** DISCOM units should place machine guns and lightweight anti-armor weapons to cover obstacles and avenues of approach. Grenade launchers mounted on vehicles are effective fire suppression systems that can be quickly dispatched to threatened areas. Weapons systems evacuated to the DSA and BSA for repair should be used to prevent a breach of the perimeter. Weapon systems awaiting repair should be integrated into the defense plan.